

madison
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READ

CATCH A GLIMPSE OF SKETCHES FROM THE KINGS AND QUEENS OF THE CATWALK AND CURL UP WITH A COPY OF ONE OF THIS MONTH'S MUST-READS

MASTER STROKES

On the Jack Back Book Spring/Summer

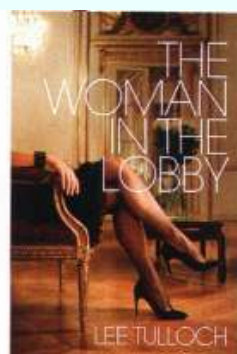
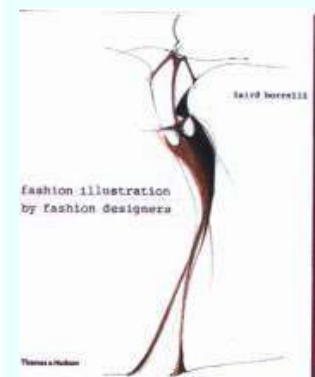
Available now (\$75, Thames & Hudson).

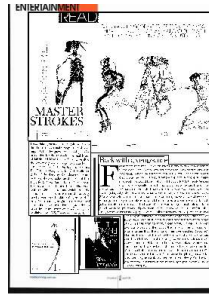
Breathtaking garments that ignite a catwalk flashbulb frenzy usually begin as strokes on paper. While designers are invariably lauded or decried for the three-dimensional fusion of fabric and form that is the end result of the creative process, its genesis can be an artwork in itself. In *Fashion Illustration By Fashion Designers*, Laird Borrelli has gathered the sketches of 60 designers (some pictured above), including the likes of Karl Lagerfeld, Yves Saint Laurent, Christian Lacroix and Gianfranco Ferré. The book features 280 illustrations which run the gamut from austere to cartoonish and edgy to what-were-you-thinking? Regardless, they provide a revealing insight into the process of garment making and undeniable proof that its practitioners are artists on numerous levels. Available now (\$75, Thames & Hudson).

Back with a vengeance

For reasons best known to themselves, many people still associate Sydneysider Lee Tulloch with her scorching 1989 debut *Fabulous Nobodies*, which eviscerated the New York doorbitch world and broke the chick lit mould before the phrase had even been invented. Five books later, the wit is still apparent but the sentences are more elegantly turned, the plots more textured and the characters multidimensional. Her latest novel, *The Woman in the Lobby*, takes on the intriguing subject of how, if and when women separate love and sex. With *The Bride Stripped Bare* candour – but much more fun along the way – we follow Violet Armengard, a 30-year-old divorcee who joins the ranks of women who trade their guile, beauty and bodies for the luxury of life in Europe's grandest hotels. Tulloch somehow manages to write dispassionately about passion and thus transforms the many sexual liaisons in these pages into revelations of character. Her prose is studded

with insights gathered over a lifetime of people watching. For example, while assessing the businessmen prospects in the lobby at Paris's Hotel Metropolitan, Violet notes, "Some will shower and come back to the lobby, the musk of their anticipation even stronger than the citrus of their over-applied cologne." Mentored in her new lifestyle by Florin – one of those characters you'd love to have to a dinner party, but would hate to see date your best friend – Violet's pursuit of hedonism takes her into arms, hearts and beds worldwide. It also makes her not only a master of betrayal but seemingly anaesthetised to its consequences. Of course, neither can last and it's this unravelling that gives way to punch-in-the-guts substance and moral complexity. You'll never look at a five-star lobby in the same way again. Available now (\$32.95, Penguin).





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APRIL'S SHORTLIST

DISQUIET BY JULIA LEIGH
(\$29.95, HAMISH HAMILTON)

When Toni Morrison is writing your blurbs and *The Observer* newspaper has named you "One of 20 writers to watch in the 21st century", there might be a little pressure on your second work. Leigh delivers this and more with her novella about a young mother and her two children who flee Australia for France, where their grandmother lives. Dark, melancholic, yet achingly simple, Leigh's prose is as exquisite as a piece of fine crystal you don't want to examine too closely for fear of shattering it. You needn't worry, as this book holds up to the most ardent scrutiny.

THE PORN REPORT BY ALAN MCKEE, KATHERINE ALBURY AND CATHARINE LUMBY
(\$34.95, MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY PRESS)

Secretly like it, openly loathe it or simply tolerate it, pornography is a major business in Australia. In this revealing examination of porn consumption in our wide land, the authors cite studies which challenge many assumptions. For example, 58 per cent of porn consumers describe themselves as religious. With debates on changes in technology, feminism and protecting children, this is not a book for the squeamish or prudish. Wait – that's exactly who it's for.

A PARTISAN'S DAUGHTER BY LOUIS DE BERNIÈRES
(\$32.95, RANDOM HOUSE)

The author of *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* has a knack for weaving broken characters into complete love stories and once again comes through with the tear-jerking goods. This time, the story is set in London and the protagonists are an ageing Brit and Yugoslavian hooker, whose father was one of Tito's partisans. Flitting between past and present, de Bernières is such a gifted writer that you hardly seem to notice the jumps. All you care about is whether these disparate souls find some measure of peace while hoping for happiness.



A Fraction of the Whole, by Steve Toltz, (\$36, Penguin) is available now.

Author Steve Toltz's TOP 5

- 1 **CONCRETE BY THOMAS BERNHARD** "Tirades of outrage have never been so hypnotic or funny as when they come from one of Bernhard's obsessive, self-destructive narrators."
- 2 **MYSTERIES BY KNUT HAMSUN** "Okay, so he gave his Nobel prize to Joseph Goebbels as a gift. He also wrote this unique, strange, haunting and beautiful book."
- 3 **THE BOOKS IN MY LIFE BY HENRY MILLER** "While many authors hide their influences, Henry Miller shouts, pushing his favourite writers like drugs on to whoever will listen. An
- 4 **REVOLUTIONARY ROAD BY RICHARD YATES** "This book puts you on edge from the first page and never lets you go. I've never read realism rendered so poetically or felt for characters so intensely. I've not yet recovered from this disturbing story."
- 5 **A SHORT HISTORY OF DECAY BY E.M. CIORAN** "I can't say I know what he's talking about all the time, but he says it so very, very well. His use of language is astounding and his confounding ideas described so lyrically that you must read on, savour and re-read every sentence." →